## centre of Downton star's protest Squatters occupy office block at

## Matt Watts

council building which Downton Abbey star Jim Carter is fighting to stop being SQUATTERS have taken over a former turned into homes.

cil's derelict housing and social services offices opposite West Hampstead train station last Saturday. They want to turn Activists moved into Camden counthe five-storey building, which has

been empty for three years, into "London's biggest community centre".

Carter, who plays butler Carson in the ITV drama, is leading the Save West Hampstead Stop the Blocks! campaign against A2 Dominion's scheme for 163 homes and wants to return the 25,000 so ft building to community use.

ership, has approached council bosses The squatters' group, Camden Moth to apply for a lease to stay in the build.

ing. They are using computers, printers, photocopiers and phones left by A second-floor office has been furned linto a community meeting room and there are plans for a recording studio, the council to prepare the campaign. multimedia centre and internet cafe.

Campaigner Phoenix, who is leading Veteran housing and environmental the group, said a maximum of 20 people would be allowed to live on the site.

against closing a housing office during He said: "We are in here as a protest a housing crisis. But people do not Community facilities are being shut down and this is an incredible space want this to become a mass squat.

be doing with empty buildings in London. It can be London's biggest community centre and all selffunded. It would also save the council thousands of pounds a week on paying for security guards while being an amazing community resource. We are

well, Camden council's finance chief, said the group was "naïve and misguided".

chance of that housing are harming the housing, half of it affordable, that will to talk about housing, but this is a development that would provide much needed nity immensely. They benefit the commu-

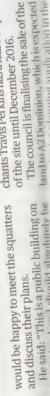
"It can be a model for what we should that can help provide them. hopeful Camden will get on However, Theo Black He said: "They want board."

> leave you speechless... Broadband offers to









munity. The fact that the council has

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to submit a planning application in the

now year.

The council is finalising the sale of the chants Travis Perkins has a lease on part until at least 2017, as builders' merof the site until December 2016.

estate agent - which would charge a erty since 1980, will pay a flat fee of If he sold it through a conventional £899 to the SellMyHome.co.uk agency. in Britain to be marketed by an online The owner, who has lived in the propwith a price tag of £20 million has become the most expensive property A NINE-bedroom house in Kensington Consumer Business Editor estate agency.

left, including Tom, above, are using old opposes the building's redevelopment save the offices, top. Jim Carter, far left, Sit-in: the Camden Mothership group, phones, above left, in a campaign to

handle most of the viewings on the price of £19.95 million. He will also said that the stamp duty bill of more than £2 million is included in the asking The owner, 69, a multi-millionaire hedge fund and property magnate who has decided to leave London, has also fee of 1.5 to three per cent, plus VAT - he would face a bill of between £359,100 and £718,200.

reys of the house in 1980 before buying Phillimore Gardens house because this He paid £375,000 for the upper stois not included in the fee.

Tomes the basement a few years later. It was gutted and refurbished in 2001. The townhouse, which was built in 1860 and has



Kensington house for £375,000 in 1980 profit: the vendor bought part of the

not been able to get a toehold in the with interest because online agents have estate agent last year at £15 million. The industry is expected to view the sale upper echelons of the market.

but the deal fell through because of new Knight Frank agent Will Clark, was instructed to sell a £15.5 million house on Hans Place in Knightsbridge last year, SellMyHome.co.uk, led by former

Mr Clark said: "Online estate agency can work at all levels of higher stamp duty rates.

the market. This property is likely to attract interest from globe due to its

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Hampstead campaign said its members A spokesman for the Save West spoken to our lawyers and are willing already occupied the building. We will not negotiate with squatters and have to take legal action to evict them."

public land and should absolutely be He said: "This is a public building on used to provide services to the comand discuss their plans.

is most expensive to go on sale online

Jonathan Prynn

ycoon's £20m house